



Bats Eat Bugs *and other good things*

There are almost 1,000 different kinds of bats! Most bats eat insects, and some eat fruit and *nectar*. Nectar is the sweet liquid of flowers. A

few bats are carnivores. They eat meat – small mammals, frogs, fish, and other bats. Less than 1% of bats feed on blood.

Insectivores (insect-eaters)

Most of the bats that live in Arizona are insectivores – they feed on insects. Insect-eating bats usually have small eyes and large ears. They use echolocation to find their way in the dark and to find food. Echolocation is a special hearing system. Bats make high-pitched sounds, then listen for the returning echoes. Some insect-eating bats have a nose leaf (a flap of skin), which probably helps direct echolocation sounds. Insect-eating bats use one or more of these hunting styles:

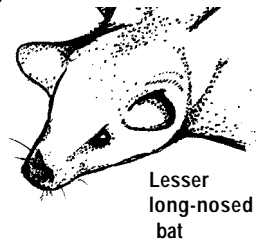
- *Fast food on the run* – the Mexican free-tailed bat flies high, at 65 miles an hour, catching its favorite food – moths.
- *Swoop and snack* – the long-eared myotis bat (myotis means "mouse-eared") flies low, then swoops down to snatch insects off plants.
- *Stalk and munch* – the pallid bat lands on the ground and stalks its prey (beetles, scorpions, and centipedes).



Big-eared bat

Nectarivores (nectar-feeders)

A few bats of Arizona are nectarivores – they feed on nectar. They use their keen senses of smell and sight to find nectar and pollen. They usually have a long nose and a long, thin tongue.



Lesser long-nosed bat

Nectar-feeders flower hop. As they fly from flower to flower drinking nectar, pollen grains stick to the fur on their head and shoulders. The pollen grains drop off onto other flowers, pollinating them. The lesser long-nosed bat is an important pollinator of the saguaro cactus. This bat is endangered because of habitat loss.

Some plants have special flowers that attract bats. These flowers open at night, are white in color, have a strong musky scent, and often grow on the end of long branches, where bats can reach them easily.

Sanguivores (blood-feeders)

Vampire bats live in Mexico, Central America, and South America. They use echolocation to find their way in the dark, and use their senses of sight, smell, and hearing to find food. In addition, Vampire bats listen for the breathing sounds an animal makes. Once they have found prey, scientists believe the bats use heat-sensing pits on their nose, to find blood vessels that are close to the skin's surface. Vampire bats do not "suck" blood, but instead lap it up.

Frugivores (fruit-eaters)

The large fruit-eating bats are called "flying foxes". They live in tropical areas of Africa, Asia, and Australia. They find food using their senses of sight and smell. Flying foxes have large eyes and a long nose.



Flying fox

A Batty Poem

Bats are mammals
like you and me.
Some live in caves
and some live in trees.



Bats are nocturnal
they are active at night.
No bats are blind,
some have *good* sight.

They use echolocation
to find insects they eat.
They can fly at 60 miles per hour
and at 10,000 feet!

When the weather turns cold
and there's no food to eat
some bats migrate, or hibernate
in a deep sleep.

Some bats are pollinators
and some eat fruit.
Just look at their noses or ears,
they are adapted to suit.

So, don't be afraid
next time you see a bat.
They are part of nature
and belong just where they're at.

Bat Activities

I. Match the cartoon bat on the left to its "real" name on the right.



Lesser long-nosed bat



Mexican long-tongued bat



Spotted bat



Townsend's big-eared bat

Use these "real" bat names to draw your own cartoon bat:

silver-haired bat
big brown bat
ghost-faced bat
California leaf-nosed bat
western red bat
long-legged myotis
pocketed free-tailed bat

II. Unscramble the letters to find the word defined in each sentence. *Hint* words can be found in the poem above or in the text on the other side.

gaetimr – travel to another place when the seasons change. _____

tarnec – this is the sweet liquid from flowers that some bats eat. _____

arntconlu – animals that are active at night.

tacheoloc – bats do this when they send out a sound that bounces off objects, back to the bat.

dillap tab – this bat stalks its prey. _____

tinsces – this is what most bats eat. _____

nyfli ofx – a large fruit-eating bat from Asia, Africa, or Australia. _____

veca – a dark place where bats may live. _____

III. Write a poem about bats using some of the words you unscrambled.